



ALERT

News from the UFMCC
on AIDS Legislation, Education, Research and Treatment.

October 1993

MCC Manchester, UK, Stages Healing Service at Festival

Rev. Paul Whiting, pastor of MCC Manchester, UK, and the Principle of Samaritan College in Europe, was invited to stage a worship service with an emphasis on HIV/AIDS at the gay and lesbian festival in Manchester. The service was held August 29, 1993, as part of a three-day fair to raise funds for HIV/AIDS services. Not only is this the first time such a service has happened, it is the first time MCC has been invited to participate in the festival. There were over 100 people who attended the worship service. On the last night, there was a candlelight vigil, with over 1,500 people there. MCC's part in next year's event has been guaranteed by the success of this year's event. "It was one of the most positive events I've been to in a long time," says Rev. Whiting.

"We ran a half hour service from the main stage, with some speakers and singing, then afterwards held a communion service in the tent," Rev. Whiting reported. "I preached at the service. The invitation came as a direct response to the MCC's working with safe sex and men's health programs." Whiting helped



Rev. Paul Whiting

create an explicit HIV prevention 1993 calendar through his work with MeSMAC (Men who have Sex with Men in Action in Community.) "It was the calendar that did it. There's a groundswell of support for the work of MCC Manchester, but there's a general feeling of anti-church sentiment among the gay and lesbian community." Rev.

Whiting is the honorary treasurer and executive officer of MeSMAC. The city of Manchester recently gave MeSMAC the franchise to do HIV/AIDS education in Manchester.

Manchester has the largest gay and lesbian community in the United Kingdom outside of London. Located in a primarily industrial area of Northwest England, Manchester has a two-year old MCC with over 30 adherents and five persons on the pastoral team.

Manchester has the highest rate of HIV in the United Kingdom, outside of London. HIV is seen predominantly among gay men, and there is a noticeable increase among young gay men. But Rev. Whiting reports, "The city is very well geared up. We have the most advanced treatment clinic probably in Europe, outside of London. We're also about to open the first charitable hospice. There are two support networks, the Body Positive, and George House, a City Council sponsored project."

The English pastor is also on the

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Reclaiming The Energy of Grief: A Grieving Congregation Takes Action

By Rev. Christine Oscar, Pastor of St. Mary's MCC, Greensboro, NC

(Reprinted with permission from "Oil of Gladness," Vol. 2, No. 3, Aug 1993. Pub. by GLAD District, UFMCC)

Grief WILL impact congregations. Loss, especially multiple loss, cannot be ignored. Grief will be acted out, whether positively or negatively. The Pastors or other leaders will make the difference in how a congregation grieves, heals, and empower people to go on in life and ministry.

We are all living through AIDS, whether we carry the virus in our own bodies or in our extended church bodies. In 1986, Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson met with the Pastors in our district and told us about the realities of grief hitting our churches and how we must prepare ourselves. I remember requesting

a break and stepping outside. Next thing I knew I was being held in Rev. Paul Tucker's arms, sobbing. I didn't want to "do" grief, let alone lead my congregation through it year after year. Now, all these years later, Nancy, Paul, and myself, as well as many others, have learned to mobilize people in grief by learning from those who grieve.

When we first started getting our church geared up to deal with all of this and began teaching classes at our district conferences around grief, I was told by a leader in our

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Book Review: "AIDS and Faith"

By Normand Bonneau, Barbara Bozak, Andre Guindon, and Richard Hardy. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Novalis, St. Paul University, 1993.

Review by Rev. Steve Pieters

Rev. Ron Bergeron, who died of complications of AIDS in 1990, introduced me to Richard P. Hardy, Professor of Theology at St. Paul University in Ottawa, when Hardy was working on a book about Ron's journey with AIDS. That book is due out in 1994. Meanwhile, Hardy has been published as one of four contributors to a book of theological and ethical reflections on AIDS called *AIDS and Faith*.

As the flyer for the book states, "This book focuses on God, suffering, spirituality and ethics. Through their reflections on the mystery of God, suffering and prayer, elements of spirituality for people living with AIDS, and the ethical issues raised by the disease, the authors offer resources that help us meet, with compassion and insight, the challenges of living with AIDS."

Each section of the book offers new and challenging insights into the theological questions which HIV/AIDS raises. I particularly appreciated the way Barbara Bozak, in her chapter "Speech for the Speechless, Power for the Powerless," relates the suffering of people living with AIDS to the Psalms of Lament. She clearly describes how the Psalms of Lament offer a model for healing the suffering of people living with AIDS.

Hardy's chapter "To Break the Silence," focuses on the spiritual challenges and opportunities for persons living with AIDS. He offers an excellent analysis of the way AIDS can push people to a deeper level of spirituality. In the course of his article, he quotes a number of people living with AIDS, including UFMCC clergy Rev. Ron Bergeron, Rev. Ron Russell-Coons, and Rev. Steve Pieters. Perhaps because this chapter is so well-grounded in the real-life experiences of people with AIDS, this section is also the clearest and strongest of the four chapters of the book.

This book was written by four professors on the Faculty of Theology at St. Paul University in Ottawa. The frequently sophisticated academic language and style may make this book difficult for some readers. But for those who enjoy theological, scriptural and ethical analyses, there are many challenging insights and helpful perspectives on living and serving in the HIV/AIDS crisis.

For information on ordering this book, contact Novalis Customer Service, 49 Front St., E., 2nd Floor, Toronto, Ont., Canada M5E1B3; (1-800) 387-7164. ▼

MCC Manchester (cont'd from page 1)

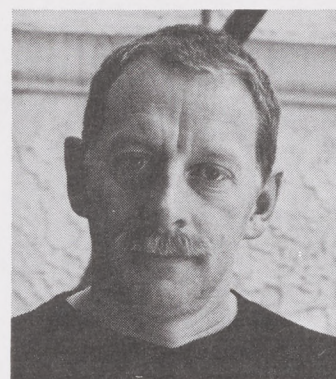
organizing committee of the World AIDS Day Service in the Anglican City Cathedral. Rev. Bob Jones, an MCC clergy person living with AIDS in Liverpool, has been invited to preach at the service.

Rev. Whiting continues his hospital chaplaincy, reported in the November 1992 issue of ALERT. "It's very difficult to get through the red tape of the system, so I'm largely working with referrals on home visits."

Readers can get hold of the MeSMAC HIV prevention 1993 calendar by writing Rev. Paul Whiting at MCC Manchester, 16 Brantwood Terr., Moston, Manchester, M91LU. The calendar targets men who have sex with men. ▼

HIV News From Australia

Rev. Greg Smith, District Coordinator of UFMCC's District of Australia, reports a drop in the number of new HIV infections in Australia. According to the September 3 *Sydney Star Observer*, new HIV infections have dropped 4.6 percent, from 985 in 1991-92, to 940 in 1992-93. However, the diagnosis rate among women has increased by 28 percent in 12 months. HIV/AIDS has claimed the lives of 2,630 people in Australia.



Rev. Greg Smith

One of the issues facing the Australian government concerns autoclaving, a steam sterilization process for dental instruments. The Australian Federation of AIDS Organizations (AFAO) challenged the government to make autoclaving a mandatory part of public health policy following an Australian Broadcast Corporation TV show called "Four Corners." The first segment of the program focused on the Florida, USA dentist who allegedly infected six patients with HIV through use of unsterilized dental instruments. The second part revealed that 65% of dentists surveyed in suburban Sydney did not use autoclaving procedures between each patient. The Australian Dental Association has recommended sterilizing instruments for each patient, but based on the survey results, many Australian dentists do not seem to follow this recommendation. There have been no confirmed cases of HIV being transmitted through dental instruments in Australia.

In other HIV news, the Minister for Housing of New South Wales has announced a plan to give a rental subsidy to persons living with HIV/AIDS in Sydney. According to this scheme, rather than having persons with HIV/AIDS wait for public housing, the government will provide a subsidy which will allow the person to remain in private housing while only paying rent for public housing. Previously, people with HIV/AIDS were placed on a waiting list for public housing for up to nine months. With an increasing demand for housing from people with HIV/AIDS, the AIDS Council of New South Wales has been in negotiation with the Department of Housing for the past year.

Webster also announced a new booklet, "Housing Assistance for People with HIV/AIDS," as well as a new training program for Department staff to sensitize them to the issues and needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS. ▼

ALERT

ALERT is a monthly newsletter containing information on AIDS Legislation, Education, Research and Treatment. The Editor is Rev. Dr. A. Stephen Pieters. For more information, please write: ALERT, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

Reclaiming the Energy of Grief (cont'd from page 1)

Fellowship that what we were dealing with was "nothing" because our death ratio was "nothing" compared to the churches out west. I was told we were "wasting our time creating programming" when we could simply call on the REAL EXPERTS. I was horrified at such an attitude. What we were dealing with was VERY REAL TO US and was NOT "nothing". We were open to learning from others but we also felt we had some very valuable things to offer. My own grief helped me to put even more effort into developing programs and training that would create life in the face of death in my church and in the churches in our district.

In the early days I taught the church; now they are teaching me. Together we have found ways to grieve in healthy ways and to transform the pain into gain. We have lost many loved ones in the church and many others outside of our "official" membership. As a result, our church is becoming a church without walls. We minister to those that God sends our way. I want to share some of the ways our church has responded to grief and loss beyond emotional and spiritual support, beyond cards and notes, and beyond a box or two of food.

We started with a Prayer Bear Ministry and we now are identified throughout the area hospitals by the large huggie bears found in the beds of our friends. We expanded our food bank substantially as a memorial to Edward Bauguss. We now send out 2 to 3 thousand meals a month. Individual members often carry over fresh baked goods or special dishes for our folks who are too ill to cook. Members frequently help with housekeeping and personal errands. Members provide rides to doctor appointments and hospital treatments.

We have a "Diaper Ministry" for children with HIV. We provide toiletries and cleaning supplies since these can't be purchased with food stamps. We occasionally buy equipment or pass on donated health equipment that provides more quality living conditions (i.e., wheelchair, shower chair, hand-held shower, cushions, extra sheets and blankets). We have a small medication fund started as a memorial for Dan Turner. We provide adult diapers and bed pads for our folks who may need them. We do whatever we can do to make life more livable.

SUPPORT COMES IN MANY WAYS.

Our church has learned to move beyond just meeting the physical needs



Rev. Christine Oscar

and to go the second mile to provide extra emotional and spiritual support. More and more members are seeking training around "etiquette" regarding home and hospital visits. Rather than going in for a brief visit full of smiles and good wishes, they are learning to "read" the situation. Does the person need someone to listen to them? Do they need a back rub? Do they want you to simply sit and hold their hand? Do they want to be left alone, or are they afraid to be left alone?

We are trying to learn to give what is needed rather than just giving what we are "comfortable" with giving or doing. That's what it means to go the second mile, going beyond the norm, the comfortable or the familiar to the uncharted territories, making a map as we go along. It also means being willing to allow the person who is ill to lead and direct rather than assuming we have all the answers. Empowering people means allowing them to have the power of decision-making as to what they want and need.

Tenth International Conference on AIDS Scheduled

The Tenth International Conference on AIDS, and the International Conference on Sexually Transmitted Diseases will take place in Yokohama, Japan, August 7-12, 1994. The Conference theme will be "The Global Challenge of AIDS: Together for the Future." The program will concentrate around four tracks: Basic Science, Clinical Science and Care, Epidemiology and Prevention Impact, Societal Response and Education. Abstract deadline is February 28, 1994.

For additional information, kindly contact:

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This ministry has been a humbling and empowering one for our church. Last November I went back to a home where I had been visiting a person near death to find the person "on duty" near tears in the kitchen. When I asked Jeanne what was "wrong" I found out what was right. Her answer to my question of concern was: "He said he trusted me." Dan, the patient, sensing her concern over his deteriorating condition sought to ease her fears by affirming his trust in her abilities to handle whatever would come up. His faith in her was both empowering of her and humbling at the same time. Many of us were similarly affected by this loving man. He taught us to be better ministers and in his life and death, he gave us life.

A few months ago, I walked into a hospital room to find my friend on the floor by his bed. I was tempted to panic but held it back. Instead, I leaned over and asked him a stupid question like: "What are you doing on the floor?" He explained that he had fallen and was too weak to get up and was unable to get to the hand control to summon a nurse. Then he really surprised me when his face lit up with a smile and he said, "But I knew you would be here soon, so I just relaxed and waited for you!" That too was a humbling and empowering moment, feeling his trust and confidence and his ability to rest and relax because he knew help was to be forthcoming.

We are learning to grieve our losses but we are also learning to be empowered in the midst of our grief. We have learned that to be involved, deeply involved, helps us to heal faster. We know we are making a difference through this special ministry and this is helping us to learn to live with our losses in a new and vital way. ▼

U.S. Citizens with HIV/AIDS: Boil Your Tap Water!

GMHC's Treatment Issues, Vol. 7, No. 7, reports that the water supplies of several U.S. cities are contaminated, and persons living with AIDS with less than 100 T-helper cells are advised to use only bottled water, or to boil all tap water for at least three minutes. Tap water which has been boiled should be stored in containers which have been cleaned with hot, soapy water, rinsed, and thoroughly dried. Officials estimate that 200,000 residents of Milwaukee developed crypto-sporidiosis due to the temporary contamination of the water supply. The contamination was probably due to drainage from cattle farms leaking into the water system. Cryptosporidiosis can be chronic and life-threatening to persons with AIDS.

Los Angeles residents should also take precautions in using tap water. Myco-bacterium avium intracellulare (MAI) or other mycobacteria have been found in all hospital water supplies, 34 of 40 home water samples, and eleven of thirteen reservoir samples. MAI itself was found in nine of ten hospital water supplies, 11 of 40 home samples, and five of thirteen reservoir samples.

Reports from New York City indicate that the water supply carries potentially infectious levels of Cryptosporidium and Giardia, serious intestinal parasites. E. coli bacteria also have been found in the drinking water of the West Village, Chelsea, and the Lower East Side. ▼

Treatment News

[The following articles are reprinted with permission from "Treatment Issues," the Gay Men's Health Crisis Newsletter of Experimental AIDS Therapies, Aug 1993, Vol. 7, No. 7, and Sept 1993, Vol. 7, No. 8]

Info For HIV-Positive Inmates

The Treatment Education Program of AIDS Project Los Angeles produced "Be Good to Yourself," a self-care manual for inmates living with HIV. Copies are available free of charge by calling Stephan Korsia at 213/962-1600, ext. 270.

AmFAR runs a program which provides AIDS/HIV treatment information, including complimentary copies of "Treatment Issues," to prison libraries across the country. Joe Guimento at AmFAR coordinates the program. Call him at 212/682-7440.

Parvovirus Linked To Anemia

A recent report from the University of Iowa (Journal of Infectious Diseases July 1993, 101-105) suggests that parvovirus B19 can persistently infect people with AIDS, resulting in bone marrow suppression and anemia. The researchers analyzed patients who entered the ddI expanded access due to AZT intolerance, particularly severe anemia. They found that four of five patients who entered the program with severe anemia while on AZT had persistent viremia. They suggest that parvovirus B19 infection, which can be treated with intravenous immunoglobulin, should be considered in people with AIDS, particularly when cytopenias occur.

Pregnancy Hormone Studied For KS

Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (HCG), an approved treatment for inducing fertility in women (as well as for treating the failure of the testicles to descend, and inadequate gonad function in men), has been proposed as a KS treatment based on an anecdotal report of spontaneous resolution of KS lesions in a pregnant Belgian woman and unpublished animal data from Robert Gallo at the U.S. National Cancer Institute. Sharon Lee, a Kansas physician who is affiliated with San Francisco's Project Inform, will perform a study of HCG on six of her male KS patients. The study will examine 5,000 units of HCG three times a week for up to six months. In addition to HCG's effect on KS lesions, the study will also examine any possible penile or testicular changes in the men.

Famciclovir NDA By End of Year

SmithKline Beecham, a Philadelphia-based drug company, plans to file a New Drug Application (NDA) for famciclovir, a new broad spectrum anti-herpes drug similar to acyclovir, by the end of the year. The NDA will probably be for herpes zoster ("shingles") with additional indications, including herpes simplex, and European filings to follow in 1994. SmithKline claims famciclovir is more bioavailable than acyclovir and has a greater intracellular half-life. SmithKline expects that famciclovir will require less frequent dosing than acyclovir.

Triple Tuberculosis Treatment NDA

Marion Merrel Dow, a Kansas City, MO-based drug company, filed a New Drug Application (NDA) for Rifater, a three-in-one combination of rifampin, isoniazid, and pyrazinamide, three widely-used tuberculosis treatments. The company already markets rifampin under the brand name Rifadin. The company hopes its three-in-one product will improve patient compliance by reducing the number of pills in a TB treatment regimen.

HIVIG For Vertical Transmission Studies

North American Biologics Supplies will provide HIVIG (HIV-specific immune globulins) to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the NIH for a phase II clinical trial in HIV-positive pregnant women. The study will test the ability of HIVIG to prevent HIV transmission from mother to fetus. Four hundred women are expected to enroll in the study, which was expected to begin in September. The company hopes this study will provide convincing evidence of HIVIG's efficacy.

Treatment Issues On-Line

"Treatment Issues" is now available on three on-line computer bulletin boards: The BACKROOM, 718/951-8256 modem, 718/951-8998 voice; NAPWA Link, 703/998-3144 modem, 202/898-0414 voice; and PRC BBS 217/525-3469 modem, 217/525-3456 voice.